

CUPS Assessment of Pediatric Poisonings		
Category	Assessment	Actions*
Critical	Absent airway, breathing, or circulation	Perform initial assessment; begin interventions and transport simultaneously; call for ALS backup if available
Unstable	Compromised airway, breathing, or circulation; AVPU=V, P, or U	Perform initial assessment and interventions; begin transport; call for ALS backup if available
Potentially unstable	Normal airway, breathing, and circulation; AVPU=V or A with agitation; poison carries risk for altered mental status, seizures, shock, or respiratory distress	Perform initial assessment and interventions; provide oxygen; transport promptly; maintain and monitor airway and ventilation
Stable	Normal airway, breathing, and circulation; AVPU=A; no risk for altered mental status, seizures, shock or respiratory distress	Complete initial assessment, focused history, and detailed physical exam; transport as necessary

**If the toxic substance is known, EMTs should bring it to the hospital in its original container. If the toxic substance is not known, or if multiple substances may be involved, bring in all suspected poisons.*

Based on CUPS Assessment Table © 1997 N. D. Sanddal, et al. Critical Trauma Care by the Basic EMT, 4th ed.

Assessment Findings for Swallowed Poisons					
Poison	Airway	Breathing	Circulation	Mental Status	Other Findings
Stimulant (cocaine, PCP, cold meds) <i>sympathetic pattern</i>	Normal	Fast	Fast pulse; high BP	Agitated, alert	Sweating; enlarged pupils
Narcotic (methadone, heroin)	Normal or closed	Slow, shallow	Slow pulse; low BP	Altered (V, P, or U)	Poor muscle tone; small pupils
Heart medication (digoxin, beta or calcium channel blocker)	Normal	Wheezing in asthmatics (beta blockers)	Slow pulse; low BP	Normal unless severe shock, then V, P, or U	
Iron supplement	Normal	Normal	Fast pulse; poor perfusion; low BP	Normal unless severe shock, then V, P, or U	Vomiting; abdominal pain; abdominal tenderness
Hydrocarbon (kerosene, pine oil, gasoline)	Normal unless severe altered mental status	Respiratory distress if substance was aspirated	Normal	Altered (V, P, or U)	Vomiting
Pesticide <i>cholinergic pattern</i>		Respiratory distress; wheezing	Normal or poor perfusion	Normal or altered (V, P, or U)	Small pupils; vomiting; drooling; diarrhea; sweating; increased urination; seizures
Caustic	Normal	Respiratory	Normal	Normal	Drooling;

Assessment Findings for Swallowed Poisons					
substance		distress; stridor			mouth burns; vomiting; abdominal pain
Antidepressant	Normal	Normal	Possible shock	Altered (V, P, or U)	Seizures

Some potentially serious poisonings may involve delayed onset of signs and symptoms. Transport all children who have swallowed poisons unless directed otherwise by medical control.